

Lake Michigan Coastal Program Advisory Board Regular Meeting

July 21, 2004

6:15 p.m.

Marquette Park, Gary, Indiana

Draft MINUTES

Mark Reshkin opened the meeting at 6:26 and welcomed all who attended. After introductions, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ATTENDANCE

Board members present: Henry Bliss (Porter Co. Citizen), Dorreen Carey (City of Gary), Edgar Corns (Agriculture), Paul Labus (Local Land Trusts), Charlotte Read (Environment), Dr. Mark Reshkin (Universities), Liz McCloskey (USFWS), Bill Moran (NRCS), Tim Morgan (Local Parks and Recreation), Tammy Steinhagen (Citizen), Kevin Breitzke (NIRPC), Jack Hires (Lake Michigan Aquatic Resources), Katie Rizer (Tourism), Janet Kostielney (Michigan City), Malini Goel (IDEM)

Board members absent: Rudolph Clay (Lake County Commissioner), John Evans (Porter County Commissioner), Tom Keilman (Industry and Business), Judy Beck (EPA), Niles Parker (IDOC), Jim Juricic (INDOT), J. Allen Johnson (Lake County Citizen), John Smolar (Lake Dependent Uses), John Heidebreder (Historical Resources), Don Wadleigh (USACOE), Brian Miller (Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant), Stephen Mosher (Port of Indiana), Dale Engquist (Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore), William Hager (LaPorte County Commissioner), David Pilz (City of Valparaiso)

Other interested parties present: Jeff Benoit

Lake Michigan Coastal Program Staff present: Mike Molnar (LMCP Program Manager), Jenny Kintzele (LMCP Program Specialist), Katy Smith (LMCP Project Coordinator)

New Board Members:

Molnar introduced the new board members. Janet Kostielney from the Mayor's office in Michigan City representing LaPorte County city or town. Katie Rizer representing the Porter County Convention Visitors and Tourism Council.

Old Business

Coast Week Update:

Molnar provided information on Coast Week planning activities. The South Shore Train Tour of the Coastal Area from Michigan City to Gary on September 18 from 10-12:10. There will be guest presentations on the Cultural History, Natural Resources, History of the Train, and Economics of the region. The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District has agreed to provide a special two car train free of charge for the event.

Coastal Areas of Significance:

Dr. Reshkin introduced the topic of Coastal Areas of Significance and the importance of the role of the Coastal Advisory Board. Molnar continued the discussion on the six

categories of Areas of Particular Concern. Staff will work with Board members and other agency staff to review each category. The LMCP will solicit public input on Coastal Areas of Significance. The workgroup will meet on August 11 at the Indiana Dunes Nature Center at 10:00 AM.

New Business

General Program Update

Section 309 Needs Assessment and Strategy –

Molnar stated that one of the initiatives left by Laurie Rounds was the Section 309 Assessment. Rounds had solicited proposals from groups to conduct the Assessment and Strategy. The LMCP has selected Jeff Benoit, a former Program Manager from Massachusetts and was the Director of the Office of Coastal Resource Management at NOAA.

Jeff Benoit gave some background information on Section 309. The requirement was added in 1990 to allow the states to conduct a self review of their programs. It is a voluntary program that allows the state to lay out a plan of action and obtain additional money, match free, to strengthen areas of the program. The assessments are conducted every 5 years. NOAA has presented specific questions and objectives in each of the nine subject areas.

Dr. Reshkin asked about the first 309 category wetlands. Indiana is trying to address isolated wetlands. Can the CAB and LMCP have a role with the process in a funding role and non-regulatory? Mr. Benoit answered that if the outcome is something that is different from what is in the program document and it effects change, it would be eligible for funding for up to two years.

The Section 309 assessment process has a public input requirement. It is proposed that the project will involve a series of workshops/listening sessions to go out into the community and solicit input from members of the public.

Federal Consistency

Molnar discussed the Federal Consistency process. The Program Document contains detailed information regarding the process; however, the Non-rule Policy Document contains specifics on how an application for a consistency determination is processed. The Non-rule policy document contains three lists, one each for Federal Agency Action, Federal Permit Action, and Federal Financial Assistance. Items included on the lists are the trigger events for a Consistency Review. Federal Consistency applies to project that occur only in the Coastal Area. Molnar discussed the process and highlighted the fact that there are two public comment periods included in the process. The public can provide input on whether a proposed project violates state law and which law would be violated by the proposed project.

2004 Grant Status

Molnar stated that the 2004 cooperative agreement request and all associated projects were approved July 2. The grant agreements are in process and projects will start once all the required paperwork is received and filed.

2003 Grant Status

The LMCP is still awaiting approval from NOAA on the 2003 pass through grant projects. This is a busy time of year at NOAA as all the regular cooperative agreements are processed in time for the July 1 and October 1 start dates. Thus, reprogram requests tend to be a low priority for the reviewers. The LMCP is working with NOAA to streamline the process and make things more efficient. The 2004 projects, which were part of the regular cooperative agreement, were approved on time. In future years this delay will be less of a problem as project proposals are submitted as part of the cooperative agreement request.

Staffing Update

Katy Smith is the new Projects Coordinator. She is responsible for overseeing the Great Lakes Coastal Restoration Grant projects.

The LMCP received federal approval as part of the 2004 Cooperative Agreement to fund a new position for the Coastal Nonpoint Plan. The paperwork is being prepared and will be submitted for state approval. The LMCP anticipates having someone on staff by the end of October or early November.

Statewide Priority Setting

The LMCP is taking the lead with our DNR Divisions and the IDEM in coordinating restoration efforts for all Great Lakes Basin areas. There have been several meetings to date to collect existing data for all programs. The workgroup will continue to meet to set restoration priorities for the state. These priorities will be relayed to the EPA Restoration Task Force and Workgroup. The results of this workgroup will be shared with the LMCP at a future date.

2005 Grant Priorities

The Board discussed the process and practicality of setting priorities for grant projects. Discussion focused on the number of priority issues and the value of being listed as a priority. Board members expressed interest in being able to provide input on the points assigned to each rating category. Molnar informed the Board of the process used by the Wisconsin Coastal Program in evaluating project proposals. Wisconsin allows each applicant to make a 5 minute presentation on the proposal to a review panel of six individuals, three staff and three advisory council members.

Staff and members discussed the need to report back on project selection decisions. Staff will prepare an annual statement of decisions on grant proposals. This will become more important as the program begins to receive more proposals for cultural and historical projects.

Next MeetingMeeting Date

Wednesday October 20, 2004 at 6:15 PM at Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center Auditorium

Agenda Items

Grant Priorities

Nominations of Areas of Special Concern

Marquette Greenway Report

Restoration Priorities

Announcements

Dorreen Carey announced that there would be a series of public meetings for the Marquette Greenway project.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Dr. Reshkin declared the meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM